

Friend 1

A  
VINDICATION  
OF THE  
LITERAL SENSE  
OF

Three Miracles of Christ,

- I. His turning Water into Wine.
- II. His whipping the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple.
- III. His exorcising the Devils out of the two Men.

AGAINST THE  
OBJECTIONS  
OF

THOMAS WOOLSTON, B. D.

IN HIS  
First and Fourth DISCOURSES on the *Miracles*  
of our SAVIOUR.

In Three LETTERS to a FRIEND.

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Τῶν σημείων ἀρχεται, ἣν πιστεύεται ἃ διδάσκει.

Theophylact. in IV. Matth. 53.

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L O N D O N:

Printed for RICHARD FORD at the *Angel*, and JOHN  
GRAY at the *Cross-Keys*, in the *Poultry*, M.DCC.XXIX.

A  
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- I. His turning Water into Wine.  
II. His whipping the Buyers and Sellers  
out of the Temple.  
III. His crowding the Jews out of the  
two Men.

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THOMAS WOOLSTON, B.D.

IN HIS

First and Second Discourses on the Miracles  
of our SAVIOUR.

In Three Letters to a Friend.

The second Edition, with some Additions.

Thoroughly revised in 1744.

LONDON.

Printed for RICHARD BORD in the Strand, and JOHN  
GRAY at the Cyprian Press in Pall-mall.



# LETTER I.

SIR,

**A**CCORDING to your Request in your last, I have lately look'd into Mr. *W.*'s four Discourses on the Miracles of our Saviour, and send you my Thoughts only on three of them; the rather, because in his Dedication of his third Discourse, he says, *He will accept of a Dissertation on any two or three of the Miracles, he handled, as sufficient for all*<sup>a</sup>. The three I propose to consider are, *Christ's turning Water into Wine, his driving the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, and his exorcising the Devils out of the Madmen, and sending them into the Herd of Swine.*

As to Christ's turning Water into Wine at the Marriage in *Cana of Galilee*, this is recorded by none but *St. John*<sup>b</sup>: Which our Author allows *was the Be-*

<sup>a</sup> See His third Discourse, Dedication p. 7.

<sup>b</sup> Chap. ii. ver. 1—12.

*ginning of Jesus's Miracles, and should by right have been first spoken to<sup>c</sup>.*

By his Entrance on it, we may conjecture, what he aims at in running down the literal Sense of this Miracle. *Tho' I would not* (says he) *for the World be so impious and prophane as to believe, what is contain'd and imply'd in the Letter of this Story; yet I am too grave to handle it as ludicrously as I ought<sup>d</sup>.* But before I have done with him, I believe it will appear, he hath handled it more ludicrously than he ought, or than he had any good Reason for. Indeed he asserts, that he is still a Christian, and that he hath a greater Veneration for the Person of the Holy Jesus, than to be forward to make such Sport with him, his Mother and his Disciples, as this Story affords scope for<sup>e</sup>. But I hope for his own sake, he hath some better Evidence of his Christianity, and of his great Veneration for the Holy Jesus, than he hath given in any of his Discourses on the Miracles of our Blessed Saviour.

<sup>c</sup> Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 50.

<sup>d</sup> See his fourth Discourse, p. 23.

<sup>e</sup> Page 24.

# L E T T E R I. 3

You have, no doubt, remark'd that his first Quotation from *St. Chrysostom* is by him very much misrepresented, but this is no uncommon thing with *Mr. W.* There were some (he says) anciently, whom *St. Chrysostom* writes of, whether Jews, Gentiles, or Hereticks, I know not, who took great Offence at the Story of this Wedding, accounting it from what is related in *St. John* as a riotous Feast, and that *Jesus* and his Mother, and his Disciples, not only bore a Part in the Revelings, but were most to blame for them; or he should not have countenanc'd them with his Presence, much less promoted them, by the Change of a large quantity of Water into Wine for the Use of a Company, who were already drunk with it<sup>s</sup>.

*Mr. W.* hath given us but a Part of the Quotation in *Latin*, for the Whole runs thus. Again some in this Place caluminate, that this was a Company of Drunkards, incapable to judge, whether it was Water or Wine, since the Ruler of the Feast, because they were drunk, gives his Opinion of the Wine; but this

His fourth Discourse, p. 24.



# 4 LETTER I.

*is very ridiculous: Nevertheless the Evangelist takes away this Suspicion of theirs, for he speaks not of the Opinion of the Guests, but gives us the Opinion of the Ruler of the Feast, who was sober and tasted nothing.*

From this whole Quotation, it appears the Persons, who charg'd this Company as drinking to Excess, were Enemies to Christ and Christianity, and that St. Chrysostom is very far from granting that there was any Excess us'd at this Time: and in this I am so happy as to have our Author on my Side, who says: *But I, with St. Chrysostom, am inclin'd to believe, that if Jesus did grace this Wedding with his Presence, there was no Excess encourag'd, or so much as suffer'd at*

\* Rursus hoc in loco nonnulli calumniantur, hunc ebriosorum fuisse conventum, (so far Mr. W. quotes, and only adds, &c.) de gustu differentium, (tho' I think according to the Original  $\kappa\epsilon\iota\ \eta\ \lambda\iota\sigma\theta\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma\ \tau\alpha\upsilon\ \chi\alpha\rho\iota\tau\epsilon\rho\omega\ \delta\iota\sigma\phi\alpha\sigma\iota\mu\epsilon\iota$  it should be sensus judicantium corruptus vel depravatus, but I go on with the Latin Translation) hebeti & corrupto ipsorum sensu, nec ad apprehendendum nec ad res ipsas judicandum idoneo, ita ut nescirent utrum aqua an vinum esset. Siquidem ipse Architrclinus inquit, cum inebriati fuerint, maximè hoc ridiculum. Verumptamen hanc ipsorum suspicionem tollit Evangelista: non enim convivas, inquit, de miraculo tulisse sententiam, sed Architrclinum, qui sobrius nil adhuc gustaverat, Chrysost. Homil. 21. in hunc loc. mihi, p. 113.

## L E T T E R I. 5

*it. If he did accept of the Invitation of the Bridegroom, it was for an Opportunity, not so much to turn Water into Wine, as to make a proper Discourse to the People of conjugal Duties; and as he was a Searcher of the Hearts, secretly to admonish the Married of the Sin and Mischief of Adultery. And then closes the Paragraph with this Sneer, tho' we read not of a seasonable and good Word spoken at it<sup>h</sup>. Whereby you may see our Adversary's Temper and Design.*

*I am glad to find, he believes, that if Jesus was at all at a Marriage Feast, the whole was conducted with Decency, Order, and Sobriety; and if he there wrought any Miracle, it was to manifest his Glory, to the Conversion of some, and Confirmation of others<sup>i</sup>. I suppose he means not the Glory of his Godhead; but some other Glory.*

*He thinks our Translators of the Bible have given Occasion to suspect somewhat of excess at this Wedding, or they need not have made the Water-Pots to hold two or three Pints, which Measure is as agreeable to the Original as Firkin<sup>k</sup>.*

<sup>h</sup> Mr. W.'s fourth Discourse, p. 25.

<sup>i</sup> Page 26.

<sup>k</sup> *Ibidem*.

## 6      L E T T E R I.

I'm sure our Translators understood Greek better than our Critick, for the Word \* here us'd is never translated a Pint; it is sometimes translated Amphora, and this is suppos'd to be the *Attick* Amphora, which was half as big again as the *Roman*<sup>1</sup>: Besides the Evangelist says, *these six Water-Pots of Stone were set there after the Manner of the purifying of the Jews*<sup>m</sup>. Dr. Lightfoot tells us, by purifying here is not meant those Sprinklings and Washings that were commanded by the Law for the cleansing of the Unclean, but those traditional and pharisaical Washings of the Hands mention'd, Mat. xv. 2. which the Jews us'd before they ate Bread, and of Tables, Cups and Platters mention'd, Mark vii<sup>n</sup>. which requir'd large Vessels, because they were more nice than to wash with the same Water, but every individual Person would have clean Water: Nay, had Mr. W<sup>k</sup> attended to

\* *Mercurij*.

<sup>1</sup> Vide Poli. Syn. in loc.

<sup>m</sup> John ii. ver. 6.

<sup>n</sup> Lightfoot's Works, Vol. I. p. 544, 545, 546. The exact Receipt of these Vessels he doth not go about to determine, but supposes the Greek Word answers the Hebrew Bath, because the Bath was the very Standard of all liquid Measures, as the Ephah also was of the Dry.

what



## L E T T E R I

what the Evangelist mentions not hastily or inconsiderately †, ACCORDING TO THE MANNER OF THE PURIFYING OF THE JEWS, he would have spar'd our Translators, but that was not for his Purpose. He goes on, *neither can I imagine, that Jesus, if he did convert Water into Wine, would do it in so large a Measure, for Fear of an intemperate Abuse of it, but only gave the Company a Cast of his miraculous Power, and a little Taste of his Love and good Will to them?* But don't we all know the Jews celebrated their Marriage Feasts very sumptuously, with as many Guests as they could afford? And why should Mr. W. imagine a small quantity for a large Company, or argue against it from Men's abusing it to Excess, before he hath prov'd, that the Company was small, and is disproportion'd to the Measure of Wine? Nay, if he truly believes the Evangelist, he will find the Company was so large as to want more Wine; which could not then be had, without a Cast of Christ's miraculous Power, as Mr. W. is pleas'd to express it.

† Non temerè dictum est ab Evangelistâ, Chryfost. in loc.

‡ Mr. W.'s fourth Discourse, p. 26.

# 8 LETTER I.

He says, if this Story had been related of Apollonius Tyanæus, as it is of our Jesus, I would have ridicul'd and satyriz'd it to the utmost of my Power, and have render'd him and his Disciples of all Nations, as contemptible as I could for the Belief of it<sup>a</sup>. But I'm apt to think the Jews believe Mr. W. has no better Opinion of Jesus Christ, than of Apollonius Tyanæus, for he hath sufficiently ridicul'd and satyriz'd it, under the MASK of a SUPPOS'D JEWISH RABBI, and till he names his Author, he must excuse his Readers, if they charge it on him, as vilifying and blaspheming the Blessed Jesus, for all his Pretences to the contrary.

The Case before us (he says) is Jesus's turning Water into Wine for the Use of Men, who had before well drunk<sup>r</sup>. But for all his Knowledge in the Greek, he will find the Word \* here signifies not to be drunk, but to drink to satiety, or to drink freely, or as Phavorinus says, to be fill'd with Wine †: So Gen. xliii. 34.

<sup>a</sup> Mr. W.'s fourth Discourse, p. 27.

<sup>r</sup> Page 28.

\* μεθυσθαι.

† Πληρῆσθαι.

Joseph's

# LETTER I. 9

*Joseph's Brethren drank and were merry with him\**; *were fill'd with*, says the Vulgate \*†. Moreover, these are not the Words of Christ, but of the Ruler of the Feast, declaring not how it was with the Guests there present, but only that it was the usual Custom to bring the best Wine first, and when Men had well drank, then the meaner Sort, and that this Custom was not then observ'd: Besides, in that Story there is not the least Appearance of any Indecency, but the greatest Decorum imaginable; and therefore common Candor might have induc'd Mr. *W.* to conclude from our Saviour's Carriage on all other Occasions, that he would have discountenanc'd the very Shadow of Intemperance, who himself was the most perfect Pattern of Self-denial, and hath caution'd his Disciples, *to take heed to themselves lest at any time their Hearts are overcharg'd with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, &c.* Nor is Mr. *W.* well bred or charitable,

\* *Kai ipepōthēsan met' autō.*

† Saturati sunt cum eo.

† Vide *Whitby & Syn.* in loc. where you have many other Examples, concerning the Sense of the Greek Word *ipepōthēsan.*

† *Luke xxi. 34.*



10 L E T T E R I.

in censuring the Company as intoxicated with Liquor, even before Christ work'd the Miracle, which he cannot prove, but by a bold Assertion; and if he had seriously consider'd this, Mr. *W.* needed not to *have forc'd Nature and Faith to ridicule this Story, nor have laid aside his profound Veneration for the Holy Jesus to make way for the Mystery*<sup>f</sup>: For even from the plain History of that Transaction, or literal Sense, Mr. *W.* might have made some useful and practical Reflections (as the Christian Fathers us'd to do) without ridiculing the literal Sense, which he pretends was incumbent on him, to make way for the Mystery, or rather the Sneer. Our Author indeed says, *I cannot do it, that is, ludicrously treat the Holy Jesus and his Miracle in my own Name, (tho' he might as well have done it as in a borrow'd Appellation) but, says he, having met with a satyrical Inveective of a suppos'd Jewish Rabbi to this Purpose, I here publish it, that our Clergy, as well as my self, may think of an Answer to it, and so prevent that Mischief it may do by being handed about*

<sup>f</sup> Mr. *W.*'s fourth Discourse, p. 28.

among

# L E T T E R I. II

*among the Jews and Infidels in Manuscript<sup>t</sup>.*

Whereas this pretended Manuscript containing such a satyrical Invective against Christ and Christianity, no good Christian should have publish'd it, without naming the Rabbi, and offering somewhat by way of Antidote; and till Mr. *W.* names him, with me as well as many others, he will pass for the pretended *Jewish* Rabbi, since any one may suspect a Person of Mr. *W.*'s luxuriant Fancy capable of framing twenty such Manuscripts, if his profound Veneration for the Holy Jesus did not check it; for he calls his Author only *a suppos'd Jewish Rabbi*, not a real one; and therefore People will be generally apt to call him Rabbi *Woolston*.

This Invective is very long, containing above fourteen Octavo Pages, in which you know are the following Things, that I shall consider by way of Specimen: thus treating of Christ's Miracles, he says, *some of them are absurd Tales, others foolish Faëts, others unjust Actions, others ludicrous Pranks, others*

<sup>t</sup> Page 28, 29.

## 12 LETTER I.

*jugling Tricks, others magical Enchantments—And that the first Miracle that he wrought, viz. that of his turning Water into Wine at an extravagant and voluptuous Wedding at Cana in Galilee, is enough to turn our Stomachs against all the rest—Would any sober, grave, serious and divine Person, as you Christians suppose Jesus to have been, have vouchsafed his Presence at a Wedding, where such Levities, Diversions and Excesses (in our Nation of the Jews as well as others) were indulg'd on such Occasions as were not fit to be seen, much less countenanc'd by the Saint you would make him<sup>u</sup>? But with leave of our Rabbi, why might not Jesus countenance an honest Wedding with his Presence? For you know, it is an Ordinance of God, and our Saviour appear'd in his Ministry not like John the Baptist, with much Fasting and an austere Life, but with Affability and an easy open Conversation, not even allowing his Disciples to fast till he was taken from them; and therefore the Rabbins of his Time, like our present Rabbi, call'd him a Wine-*

<sup>u</sup> Mr. W.'s fourth Discourse, p. 29, 30.

Bibber,



# L E T T E R I. 13

Bibber, and as unjustly; for his Intention was to go about doing Good, to be an Example in all moral and civil Actions, and to shew us that an innocent Freedom and Chearfulness in Conversation is very consistent with the strictest Piety and Devotedness to God.

The Invective goes on, reflecting on Jesus and his Mother, *as Friends to Excess, if themselves were not guilty of it<sup>w</sup>*. But has he prov'd that any of the Company were guilty of the least Excess? No, nor can it be prov'd from the Evangelist, but only from a suppos'd Jewish Rabbi.

But his charging Christ with speaking *waspsishly and snappishly to his Mother, that if it did not proceed from the natural Badness of his Temper, yet was certainly the Effect of Drinking\**, is not worthy of a Refutation, especially since the Heathen Romans, who were disinterested in the Controversy between Jews and Christians, have given him a better Character: Besides Jesus in his Ministry was not subject to his Mother nor to be directed by her; and this being

<sup>w</sup> Page 31, 32.

\* Page 32, 33.

about

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about the Commencement of his Ministry, our Lord thus gave her this Intimation to prevent her future Meddling: But must a Person in the Exercise of his Office, be accounted an ill temper'd Man or a Drunkard, because he authoritatively forbids his Mother to meddle in the Affairs of his Office? Surely our Rabbi must know the contrary, and only writes from Malice, or else was mad or drunk when he wrote it.

The Writer of the Investive endeavours to help us out at a dead Lift, that we may understand the Virgin's Complaint *they have no Wine*, and Christ's Answer, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* Before she could finish her Request to Him, He, mistaking her Meaning, imagines, she was cautioning (him) against drinking more Wine, and exhorting him to go home; whereupon he takes her up short and quick, saying, *what have you to do with me* (for that too is the English of the Greek) *I'll not be interrupted in my Cups, nor break Company; for mine Hour is not yet come to depart: But after he rightly apprehended her, he goes to Work, and rather than the Company should want their fill, by a trick of Art, like a Punch-Maker,*

## L E T T E R I I 15

*Maker, meliorates Water into what they call'd Wine*<sup>1</sup>. Can any thing more vile and abusive be asserted concerning the Blessed Jesus? This is in so many Words repeating the old Charge against him, *that he was a Man gluttonous and a Wine Bibber, a Friend of Publicans and Sinners*<sup>2</sup>.

The rest of this Invective, stuffed with malicious and indecent, bold Reflections on our Lord, his Mother, and the rest of the Company, are all grafted on this Supposition, that they had drank too much, before that Miracle was wrought; which I have already shew'd is altogether groundless, and which I defy our Rabbi and all the Enemies of Christianity to prove, unless they produce a better Voucher of the Story of this Wedding than what we have transmitted to us from the Evangelist. And sure no Man but our Rabbi would argue at that rate, untill he had answer'd all that the Primitive Christians have advanc'd in our Lord's Vindication.

Is it not very easy for a malicious Man, to turn his Adversary's Words and Con-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. W.'s fourth Discourse, p. 34.

<sup>2</sup> Mat. xi. 19.



## 16 LETTER I.

duct into Ridicule, but will that bear the Test of good Sense? No, I dare say there are even some *Jews*, who will call this very unfair and unjust Treatment.

I think it is very easy to answer *the rational Parts of this Invektive, tho' Mr. W. owns himself unable, and believes it impossible for them, i. e. our Divines to do it: and therefore (he says) they must of Necessity go along with me to the mystical Interpretation of the Fathers; or this Miracle will turn to the Disadvantage of Religion*<sup>a</sup>.

Before I examine his Quotations from the Fathers, I have a few things to say by way of necessary Precaution, which I desire you to consider, and remember, not only with Reference to this Miracle, but to what he offers from the Fathers in Proof of the mystical Sense, and to destroy the literal Sense of the two other Miracles, I have propos'd to vindicate.

I. The Fathers, tho' many of them were learned and pious Men, yet I know no good Reason, why we should make them infallible authoriz'd Interpreters of

<sup>a</sup> Mr. W.'s fourth Discourse, p. 43.

## L E T T E R I I 27

the sacred Writings. I thought all Protestants had look'd on them as fallible Men; and that we are not bound to stand to their Judgment, farther than they speak or write according to the WORD OF GOD, which is our ONLY RULE OF FAITH, WORSHIP AND PRACTICE.

You'll find the Fathers he quotes, tho' *holy, venerable and learned Preachers of the Gospel*, as he says<sup>b</sup>, yet had their Mistakes as well as others; and Mr. *W.* who boasts so much of his Acquaintance with their Writings, I suppose, hath not read Monsieur *Dalle's* learned Treatise of the right Use of the Fathers, nor what Dr. *Whitby* hath wrote on that Subject, or at least not duly consider'd the Writings of those two great Men, for which Reason, I would recommend them to his Perusal, particularly Lib. II. cap. 3. of *Dalle*, who mentions several of their Mistakes in Chronology, Philosophy, and in their Interpretation of diverse Places of Scripture, too many to be brought into the narrow Compass of a Letter: this may abate his great Deference to their Authority in religious Matters;

<sup>b</sup> Mr. *W.*'s first Discourse, p. 5.

you'll

D

tho'

## 18 LETTER I.

tho' let me tell you I am apt to think, he has as little Veneration for the Fathers, as for our Messiah, and only makes use of them to serve his present Purpose.

II. Several of the Fathers he quotes did not live in the three first Centuries; it is true a few of them did, as *Justin Martyr* and *Origen*, and had he quoted more of these ancient Fathers, I should have paid a greater Regard to them, than to many he quotes, who liv'd in the fifth or following Centuries, *who had not our Religion* (as he asserts they had) *from the Hands of the Apostles, and of Apostolical Men, who professedly and confessedly were not endu'd with divine and extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit*, as he says They were.

III. Can Mr. W. produce one early, genuine Writer, who doth deny the literal Sense, of any one of Christ's Miracles recorded in the New Testament? Where can he match this wild Assertion of his own Invention, in any of their genuine Writings? *The literal Hi-*

Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 5.

story



*story of many of the Miracles of Jesus, as recorded by the Evangelists, does imply Absurdities, Improbabilities and Incredibilities; consequently they, either in whole or in Part, were never wrought, as they are commonly believ'd now-a-days; but are only related as prophetic and paraborical Narratives of what would be mysteriously, and more wonderfully done by him<sup>d</sup>.*

IV. In all his Quotations from the Fathers, he is guilty of a Fallacy, for because they often allegorize Scripture, he infers, they deny the literal Sense; which is a wrong Inference, for they build their allegorical Interpretations on the literal Sense, and could do no otherwise, as will appear evident beyond contradiction to all unprejudic'd Persons.

V. To what Purpose did our Saviour appeal to his Miracles, as he often did to prove the Truth of his divine Mission, if the Facts were not literally true? For an Allegory can be no Proof, but would keep the People in the Dark,

<sup>d</sup> Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 4.

and undetermin'd in their Judgments.  
See *Mat.* xi. 4, 5. *John* x. 37, 38. *John*  
xv. 24.

VI. If Mr. *W.*'s way of interpreting Scripture be right, then the Sense must always be arbitrary and precarious, and this must expose that sacred Book to the Contempt of the sober Part of Mankind; for if in the plainest Narratives we are to quit the literal Sense, and run to Allegories, we shall act contrary to all Rules of Interpreting; not only this, but all other Books; and I leave him to consider, whether he is likely by this Method of interpreting historical Narratives in Scripture, to convince *the great Mr. Scheme and Mr. Grounds*, as he ridiculously calls them, of their Mistakes concerning the Prophecies in the Old Testament, since himself is guilty of much greater Mistakes, with regard to the Miracles related in the New.

*Justin Martyr* (as Mr. *W.* quotes him) says, *it is absurd to take the Stories of the Marriages and Concubinages of the Patriarchs of the Old Testament in a literal Sense.* But what is this to the

\* Mr. *W.*'s fourth Discourse, p. 44.

# L E T T E R I I      21

Miracles of Christ? — He goes on, whereupon he, i. e. Justin Martyr as well as St. Paul and Philo-Judæus, turn those Stories, for the Honour of God and Edification of his Church, into Allegory.

Doth then St. Paul deny the literal Sense; for Instance, that Abraham had two Sons, the one by a Bond-woman, and the other by a Free-woman, which things are an Allegory? Or may it not be better translated, which things are allegoriz'd? Can any but one blinded with Prejudice imagine, that St. Paul denies that Fact? As to Philo-Judæus, I know not that we have any thing to do with him, as an authoritative Interpreter of Scripture for us Christians, tho' Philo never offer'd to deny the historical Facts, which he hath allegoriz'd, but zealously asserts the Truth of them, as the Matter or Ground of his Allegories.

Our Author proceeds, consequently, if Justin had an Occasion to speak of this Marriage before us, there's no doubt on't but he would have made Mystery of all and every Part of it.

<sup>1</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. iv. 22, 23, 24. ἀπο τοῦ ἀλλοτρίου γένους.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. W.'s fourth Discourse, p. 44.

What



## 22      L E T T E R I.

What *Justin* would have made of this Miracle is more than he can tell, but whether the Fathers speak, or are silent, our Author thinks, he can with the greatest Assurance make them serve his own Purpose: but suppose *Justin* had made Mystery of all and every part of this Marriage, by what Logick will he prove, that therefore *Justin* would have deny'd the literal Sense of it?

His Quotation from *Origen* confutes what he produces it to prove. *Origen* of all the Fathers is most famous for his Allegories, and yet our Author (so well as he thinks he is apprised of their Meanings, having had the Honour and Happiness of much of their Acquaintance<sup>i</sup>) can't get *Origen* himself on his Side, for which I produce his own Quotation, *whoever therefore reads the Scriptures about Marriages, and understands no more by them, than carnal Marriages; he errs, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the Power of God*<sup>k</sup>.

From hence it is very evident that *Origen* would have us understand more by Marriages in Scripture, than those that are carnal; but this is far from denying

<sup>i</sup> Mr. *W.*'s first Discourse, p. 6.

<sup>k</sup> Mr. *W.*'s fourth Discourse, p. 45.

## L E T T E R I I      23

the Facts of such Marriages, recorded in Scripture: Nay, he asserts the Truth of the carnal Marriages even by allegorizing them.

These two early Writers not being to his Purpose, he goes on saying, *but to come closer to the Purpose.*

St. *Augustin* is far from denying the literal Sense of this Miracle, tho' he allegorizeth it; I will not dispute our Author's Translation of him, viz. *there is a Mystery signify'd in the Story of this Marriage, as in all Jesus's Miracles, which it becomes us to open and search for; till, if possible, we are inebriated with the spiritual and invisible Wine, that Jesus made at this Feast<sup>m</sup>.* Did this Father then deny the Story of the Marriage?

The same Answer will serve to his Quotation from St. *Theophilus of Antioch<sup>n</sup>.*

*Other Fathers* (he says) *such as St. Cyril, St. Theophylact, and St. Jerome*

<sup>i</sup> Ut antea.

<sup>m</sup> Aliquid enim & in ipsis factis, innuit nobis, puto, quia non sine causâ venit ad nuptias: Excepto miraculo, aliquid in ipso facto mysterii & Sacramenti latet, &c.

<sup>n</sup> Mr. *W.*'s fourth Discourse, p. 48.

## 24 LETTER I.

*are of the same Mind about the mystical Interpretation of this Marriage°. But do they therefore deny the Facts, or the literal Sense?*

*And now whether it be an absurd and offensive Story according to the Letter, (as he asserts it is) let any one judge, and I leave it to your Judgment, whether his suppos'd Jewish Rabbi hath not forc'd a worse Construction upon it, than it will naturally bear, which I hope by this time is very plain, according to the Account I have given of it, and in the Light in which I have set it, for your Perusal. I'm sure you will soon perceive not only Mr. W.'s Malice, but false Logic too. I shall consider what he says farther in my next, and conclude, Sir,*

*Your most obedient Servant,*

\* Page 49.

\* Pages 50, 51.

LETTER



## LETTER II.

SIR,

HAVING in my last, endeavour'd to vindicate the literal Sense, or the historical Fact of our Saviour's turning Water into Wine, in Answer to Mr. W.'s Cavils, according to your Desire, and my own Promise, I proceed to consider another Miracle, viz. *Jesus's driving the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple*; and the rather, because he begins with this in his first Discourse; and in the Dedication of his third Discourse to the Lord Bishop of St. David's, he says, *don't, I beseech you, touch the Miracle of Jesus's driving the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple, because it is a hot one, and may possibly burn your Fingers* \*. But any one may see he hath burnt his own Fingers, in denying plain Facts, and in ridiculing the most serious Subjects.

\* Mr. W.'s third Discourse, Dedication p. 7.

E

I am

## 26 LETTER II.

I am not fond of burning my Fingers, but in so good a Cause, I will try Mr. *W.*'s Strength here, having fully tho' briefly refuted him in my last to you.

Mr. *W.* rightly observes, *that all the four Evangelists make mention of this Miracle<sup>b</sup>.* But whether Christ might not go twice into the Temple, first at his Entrance on his publick Ministry, as it is recorded by St. *John* Chap. ii. and a second time, in the Close of it, as it is recorded by the three other Evangelists, I will not determine; tho' St. *Chrysostome* and St. *Theophylact* his Abridger assert it, of which more hereafter.

Mr. *W.* stumbles here at the Threshold, which is an ill Omen, especially since this is the very first Miracle *he takes to task*; for he begins his Remarks, or more properly his Invective against it, in the following Manner, *I have read in some modern Author, whose Name doth not occur to my Memory, that this was, in his Opinion, the most stupendious Miracle that Jesus wrought. And in Truth it was a most astonishing one, if*

<sup>b</sup> Mr. *W.*'s first Discourse, p. 22.

*literally*

## L E T T E R II. 27

*literally true, and Jesus must appear more than a Man, he must put on an awful and most Majestick Countenance to effect it<sup>c</sup>.*

This modern Author is St. *Jerome*, who according to *Du Pin* came into the World, *A. C.* 340. and died very old, *A. C.* 420. for proof of this I must beg your Patience till I come to examine his Quotations from the Fathers, that I may not mention twice this long Passage of St. *Jerome*, a modern Author in Mr. *W.*'s Esteem: But is it not strange, that this Writer, who boasts so much of his great Acquaintance with the Fathers, and having quoted this very Father, should overlook his Notes on *Mat.* xxi?

Speaking of the Fathers, Mr. *W.* says, *tho' they are, for the most part, mysterious Writers out of the Reach of the Capacities of many, who slight them; yet I, who had the Honour and Happiness of much of their Acquaintance, fancy my self well appris'd of their Meanings<sup>d</sup>.* But *aliquando dormitat Homerus*, the greatest Boasters are sometimes put to Shame.

<sup>c</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>d</sup> Mr. *W.*'s first Discourse, p. 5, 6.



## 28 LETTER II.

Our mighty Boaster objects, *it is hard to conceive how any one in the Form of a Man, and of a despis'd one too; and then according to his usual way with a Sneer adds (and we don't read that Jesus chang'd his human Shape) with a Whip in his Hand, could execute such a Work upon a great Multitude of People, who were none of his Disciples, nor had any Regard for him<sup>e</sup>.*

The Return I will make shall be in St. Jerome's Words, one of the Fathers, he quotes, and so much admires, viz. *Somewhat of a fiery Nature, and like the Brightness of a Star darted forth out of his Eyes: and the Majesty of his Divinity shone in his Countenance<sup>f</sup>.*

I may add, was not Christ in the Form of God? And might not such a glorious Majesty appear in his very Countenance, as to terrify all Beholders, especially them, whose Consciences told them, they were guilty of profaning the House of God, turning it into a House of Merchandize, and making it a Den

<sup>e</sup> Pages 22, 23.

<sup>f</sup> Igneum enim quiddam atque sydereum radiabat ex oculis ejus & divinitatis Majestas lucebat in facie. Hieron. Oper. Vol. II. in Mat. Cap. xxi. p. 684.

## L E T T E R II. 29

*of Thieves?* Did not *Azariah* the High Priest withstand King *Uzziab*, when He offer'd to burn Incense, and drove him, with all his Guards and Courtiers, out of the Temple with Authority, and in the Name of God? And did not these Profaners of the Temple know they were guilty? If they did not, I'm sure our Lord's numerous Auditory and Votaries at that time knew it well enough, to assist him, and stand by him in that Act of Zeal for the Honour of God, and his Temple, according to the Holy Scripture. Is this more incredible than that a Band of Soldiers and Officers, who came arm'd to apprehend Jesus, should go backward and fall to the Ground, only on his asking them, *Whom seek ye?* And his answering, *I am he.*

Supposing (as Mr. W. goes on) *He i. e. Jesus could by his divine Power infuse a Pannick Fear into the People, yet what was the Reason that he was so eaten up with Zeal against the Prophanation of that House, which he himself came to destroy, and which he permitted, I may say commanded, to be filthily polluted not long after.* But you know, Sir,

<sup>g</sup> Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 23.

### 30 LETTER II.

the Temple was the Place, where God promis'd to dwell, an eminent Type of the Lord Jesus Christ: and till the Measure of the Iniquities of the *Jews* was full, by their *crucifying the Lord of Life and Glory*, God had a great Regard to it, and therefore no wonder Christ should express his Holy Indignation at it; and how is this inconsistent with God's taking Vengeance sometime afterwards on this wicked People, by destroying the Temple? Mr. *W.* may as well ask, why our Lord was circumcis'd, and came under the Ceremonial of *Moses*, seeing he came to remove all those Institutions? It became him to fulfil all Righteousness during his Ministry, and so to preserve the Decorum of the Temple, till the time that the Mosaical Dispensation ended.

*But not to form by my self* (says he) *an Invective against the Letter of this Story, let's hear what the Fathers say to it*<sup>h</sup>.

He begins with *Origen*, a greater Allegorist (as was observ'd in my last) than any of the Fathers, yet he allows the

<sup>h</sup> *Ibidem.*

Fact,



## L E T T E R II. 31

Fact, for these are his Words, which make plainly against our Caviller, and sufficiently answer every thing he quotes from this Father, JESUS DID THEN VISIBLY, *what he always doth invisibly, casting the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple*<sup>i</sup>.

This is the more remarkable, because Origen was so great an Allegorist.

St. Hilary (he says) *is of the same Mind with Origen, that this Story is only a Prefiguration of what will be done in Christ's Church upon another Occasion*<sup>k</sup>.

But his own Translation here is not fair, for the Word ONLY is not in St. Hilary, even as he quotes from him in the Margin<sup>l</sup>; and would any one besides Mr. W. pretending to be an Author, argue after this Manner? *viz.* St. Hilary calls this a Prefiguration of what will be done hereafter in the Church; therefore he denies it was ever done actually by Jesus himself.

<sup>i</sup> Tunc fecit visibiliter, quod semper invisibiliter agit, ejiciens vendentes & ementes de Templo. Orig. Oper. Vol. II. Tract. 15. Mat. Cap. xxi. p. 104.

<sup>k</sup> Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 25.

<sup>l</sup> Præfiguratio futurorum dictis præsentibus continetur. In Mat. xxi.

## 32 LETTER II.

*As to the Letter of the Story (he says) St. Hilary is plain enough, that there was no such Market kept in the Temple of Jerusalem: And if any Historians besides the Evangelists had asserted it, I know of none, who would have been so foolish as to believe that Oxen and Sheep and Goats were there sold<sup>m</sup>. To this I answer, the learned Dr. Lightfoot assures us, there was always a constant Market in the Temple, in that Place which was call'd מִנְיָן the Shops, where every Day was sold Wine, Salt, Oil and other Requisites to Sacrifices, as also Oxen and Sheep in the spacious Court of the Gentiles—The nearness of the Passover had made the Market the greater, for innumerable Beasts being requisite to this Solemnity, they were brought hither to be sold. This brings to Mind a Story of Bava Ben Buta, he coming one Day into the Court, found it quite empty of Beasts, let their Houses (said he) be laid waste, who have laid waste the House of our God: he sent for three Thousand of the Sheep of Kedar, and having examin'd whether they were without Spot, brought*

<sup>m</sup> Ibidem.

*them*

## LETTER II. 33

*them into the Mountain of the House, i. e. into the Courts of the Gentiles*<sup>n</sup>.

There were publick Markets and Shambles at *Jerusalem*, as the Law supposes necessary<sup>o</sup>. The Priests afterwards brought them into the very Courts of the Temple, that they might gratify those, who offer'd, and might get the more Gain to themselves; for these Merchants were either the Priests, or their Servants, or they were permitted by them only to Persons, who paid a certain Tax for allowing them so gainful a Place<sup>p</sup>.

*It was almost necessary for them, who liv'd far from Jerusalem to bring up Money, to purchase Sacrifices and Oblations there, rather than to bring them so long a Journey, and suitable in equity to the foremention'd Law concerning Tithes*<sup>q</sup>.

What Skill *St. Hilary* had in *Jewish Antiquities* I know not, but if *Mr. W.*'s Quotation from him, be just, I can't help thinking, the Knowledge of *Lightfoot*, *Whitby*, and other Moderns is to

<sup>n</sup> *Lightfoot's Works*, Vol. II. on *Mat.* *xxi.* 12. p. 224.

<sup>o</sup> *Deut.* *xiv.* 24, 25, 26.

<sup>p</sup> Vide *Poli Synopf.* in *Mat.* *xxi.*

<sup>q</sup> *Whitby* on *Mat.* *xxi.* 12.



## 34 LETTER II.

be preferr'd before it, and I believe I am not alone in this Opinion.

*St. Ambrose too is for the Mystery, and (if Mr. W. is to be credited) against the Letter of this Story, saying, What should be the Reason that Jesus should overturn the Seats of those, that sold Doves? This must be, says he, a figurative Story, and signifies nothing less than the future Ejection of Priests out of the Church, who shall make Gain and Merchandize of the Gospel.*

St. Ambrose is for the Mystery, we grant, but doth he in this very Citation deny the literal Sense? Can we suppose in the same Place, where he speaks of our Lord's Baptism, he says, *by that Type he admonisheth us, that they would be cast out of the Church, who would sell the Holy Ghost for Money, and mentions Simon Magus as an Instance, Acts viii?* Can we therefore suppose, he denies the Fact of Christ's Baptism?

<sup>r</sup> Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 25, 26.

<sup>f</sup> Admonet tamen dominici forma baptismatis, quando descendit Spiritus Sanctus in Columbæ Typo, ejectorum hujusmodi mercatorum in Ecclesiâ Dei consortium eos habere non posse, qui Sancti Spiritûs gratiam nundinentur, &c. Amb. Op. Vol. II. Tom. 5. in Luc. xix. p. 143.

St. Jerome,

St. Jerome, our Antagonist allows, (as his Manner is in other Cases) gives a literal Exposition of this Miracle, as far as it will bear it: But then corrects himself again, saying, there are Absurdities in the Letter; but according to its mystical Meaning, Jesus will enter his Temple of the Church, and cast out of it Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, who make a Trade of preaching<sup>t</sup>.

I have two things to offer in answer to this, I. Our well read Author in the Fathers hath overlook'd one very long Passage in St. Jerome, tho' it stands on the same Page in my Edition, whence he took his own, since he hath carelessly, if not designedly, omitted it; I beg leave here to insert it<sup>u</sup>. *Most People*

<sup>t</sup> Mr. W's first Discourse, p. 26.

<sup>u</sup> Plerique arbitrantur maximum esse signorum, quod Lazarus suscitatus est: quod cæcus ex utero lumen accepit: quod ad Jordanem vox audita sit Patris, quod transfiguratus in monte gloriam ostenderit triumphantis. Mihi inter omnia signa quæ fecit, hoc videtur mirabilius esse: quod unus homo & illo tempore contemptibilis, & in tantum vilis ut postea crucifigeretur, Scribis & Pharisæis contra se sævientibus, & videntibus lucra destrui sua, potuerit ad unius flagelli verbera tantam ejicere multitudinem: mensasque subvertere, & cathedras confingere, & alia facere quæ infinitus non fecisset exercitus. Hierom. Oper. Vol. II. in Mat. xxi. p. 684.

## 36 LETTER II.

*think the greatest of Christ's Miracles was the raising Lazarus, or the restoring Sight to the Man born blind, or the Voice of his Father heard at Jordan, or his Transfiguration on the Mount, a Prelude of his future glorious Triumph: but to me among all the Miracles he wrought, this seems more wonderful, that one Man and at that time a contemptible Man, and so mean, as that afterwards he was crucify'd: whilst the Scribes were raging against him, seeing their gain destroy'd, that he could with one Whip cast out so great a Multitude: and overthrow the Tables, and break the Seats: and do other things which an infinite Army could not have done.*

This is the modern Author Mr. *W.* by mistake banters <sup>w</sup>, as was before observ'd: and from hence it is evident St. *Jerome* believ'd not only this Miracle, but many others, as Christ's raising *Lazarus*, &c. and thinks this Miracle to be more wonderful than any of the others he mentions.

II. What is worse Mr. *W.*'s Quotation from St. *Jerome* is very much misrep-

<sup>w</sup> Mr. *W.*'s first Discourse, p. 22.

sented,



sented, that Father's Words being as follows, \* *So far for the History*, then adds, *but according to the mystery Jesus daily goeth into his Father's Temple, and casts all, as well Bishops, Priests and Deacons, as Laicks, and the whole Multitude out of his Church, and esteems the Sellers as well as Buyers guilty of one Crime.*

Mr. *W.* leaves out the Word *daily* (quotidie) and after the Word Deacons puts an *&c.* leaving out what follows, because it would have destroy'd what he brought it to prove, that not only Bishops, and others of the Clergy, who made a Merchandize of the Gospel, would be cast out of the Church, but the Laity also, who were guilty of the like Practice.

For what St. *Jerome* says, *is absurd*, is to be found several Lines after, for so runs the Paragraph in *English* †, *accord-*

\* Hoc juxta Historiam, cæterum secundum Mysticos intellectus: quotidie Jesus ingreditur Templum Patris, & ejicit omnes tam Episcopos, Presbyteros & Diaconos, quàm Laicos, & universam turbam de Ecclesiâ suâ: & unius criminis habet vendentes pariter & ementes.

† Juxta simplicem intelligentiam, columbæ non erant in cathedris, sed in caveis, nisi fortè columbarum institutores sedebant in cathedris, QUOD PENITUS ABSURDUM EST: quia in cathedris, magistrorum magis dignitas indicatur, quæ ad nihilum redigitur, cum mixta fuerit lucris. Hier. ubi supra.

## 38 LETTER II.

ing to the plain Meaning, the Doves were not in Seats, but in Holes, or little Caves, unless perhaps the Sellers of Doves sat in Seats, WHICH IS WHOLLY ABSURD: because by Chairs, the Dignity of the Masters is rather signify'd, which is reduc'd to nothing, when it is joyn'd with worldly gain. Thus you see how unfair a Quoter our Author is, in patching distant Sentences that are of different Purport, only to serve his own Purport.

By Mr. W.'s first Quotation from St. Austin, it is plain, St. Austin did not agree with St. Hilary, for he says, *where could be the great Sin of selling and buying things in the Temple, that were for the Use of it, and offer'd as Sacrifice in it?* Whereas St. Hilary, as quoted by Mr. W. above, says, *there was no such Market kept in the Temple of Jerusalem* \*. I leave him to reconcile these two Fathers, who seems to think, he is more certainly appriz'd of the Meanings of those ancient Writers<sup>z</sup>, than most learned Men now living.

I come now to his last Father, St. Theophylact, who (he says) agrees with the

<sup>y</sup> Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 26, 27.

\* Page 25.

<sup>z</sup> Page 6.

foregoing

## L E T T E R II. 39

*foregoing Fathers*<sup>a</sup>, which is true if he means in allegorizing the literal Sense of this Miracle, but false, if he supposes he rejects the literal Sense; but this Father liv'd in the XIth Century, and is too modern for an Evidence in this Case; but had Mr. *W.* consulted St. *Chrysostom*, who flourish'd in the Beginning of the Vth Century, and whose Works were abridg'd by *Theophylact*, he would have seen that this Fact is allow'd by that early Writer, or that our Lord did actually cast out the Buyers and Sellers, according to the literal Sense. *John* (says he) *relates this, but he doth it in the Beginning of the Gospel; from whence it is probable, this was done twice and at different times*<sup>b</sup>.

And *Theophylact* his Abridger was far from denying the Fact, for (he says) *Christ as Lord of the House, i. e. the Temple, cast out them that sold, shewing that what did belong to the Father, did belong to him also, and this he did likewise to shew the Care he had of the Honour of the*

<sup>a</sup> Page 27.

<sup>b</sup> Τούτο Ιωάννης φησιν ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνος μὲν ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἔτος δὲ i. e. (Ματθ.) πρὸς τῷ τέλει ὅθεν ἕκτος διότιον γινέσθαι τοῦτο, καὶ κατὰ διαφόρους καιρούς. *Chris. Homil. 57. Ad initium. Vol. I. p. 588.*

*Temple,*



## 40 LETTER II.

*Temple, and signifying likewise the removal of the Sacrifices, &c.*

These Quotations being true, I think Mr. *W.*'s Triumph is not only unseasonable but groundless, *Behold*, says he, *a wonderful Harmony among the Fathers in their Rejection of the literal, and espousal of the mystical Sense of this Miracle*<sup>d</sup>. That they espous'd the mystical Sense we don't deny, but that they rejected the literal Sense is notoriously false to the Conviction of any Man of common Sense. And *Erasmus* was of the same Mind with the Fathers, not in rejecting the literal Sense, but in espousing the mystical Sense, and his own Citation from that very great Man proves no more<sup>e</sup>.

Having had a Taste of Mr. *W.*'s Acquaintance with the Fathers, in which he prides himself too much, he will now give us a Taste of his Skill in Greek Criticisms. *Before I dismiss this Miracle*, he says, *I must observe that if the Fa-*

<sup>c</sup> Ὡς διὰ τὴν τοῦ οἴκου ὁ ἐστὶ τοῦ ἱεροῦ, ἐξέβαλε τοὺς παλῶντας, &c. Theop. in xxi. Matt. p. 121. Vide eundem in Marc. xi. p. 253.

<sup>d</sup> Mr. *W.*'s first Disc. p. 28.

<sup>e</sup> Page 29, 30.

*thers*

## L E T T E R II. 41

*thers are right above, then our Latin and English Translations of the Place in St. Matthew err in a main Point<sup>f</sup>. But it appears that he hath mistook, and grossly misrepresented the Fathers, so that the Latin and English Translations of this Place are good, and agreeable to the Sense of the Fathers: And why should our Critick find fault only with the Latin and English Translations? Since all Translations, both ancient, as the Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic and Persian; and modern, as the French and Dutch translate the Place as we do.*

*Well, how ought it to be Translated? Why instead of reading, and Jesus cast out them that sold and bought, it should be, those who sold and preach'd; that is, sold what they preach'd: for the Word ἀγοράζου does more properly signify to preach than to buy; and then closes the Paragraph with the positive Airs of a most consummate Critick, and in this Sense here, according to the Fathers, it should be construed<sup>g</sup>.*

*Tho' I can't boast so much of my Knowledge in the Greek as Mr. W.;*

<sup>f</sup> Page 30.

<sup>g</sup> Ibidem.

## 42 LETTER II.

yet, I believe, I may venture to say, Mr. *W.* is the first, who pretended to a small Competency of Skill in that Language, that ever thought of this Interpretation.

*The Word signifies to consult or deliberate, and is us'd concerning those Deliberations which are made in a Court of Judicature: it hath also other Significations in the Derivatives from the Noun, which is a Market where Wares are sold<sup>h</sup>.*

Our Critick hath not done with his Criticisms, for he says, *the Greek Word κολλυβίστης imports those, who have a Knack to barter away little base and Brass Money, with the Effigies of an Ox or Bull on it, in exchange for good Coin<sup>i</sup>.* And refers us to *Suicer's Thesaurus*, which I have consulted, and appeal to the learned, whether that Word signifies any other, than exchanging great Money into lesser Coin, with some Profit on the Change<sup>k</sup>.

<sup>h</sup> Ἀγορεύω significat consulto, delibero, propriè de deliberationibus quæ fiunt ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ, i. e. in foro judiciali, Hesych. Vide & alias signif. in derivatis ab ἀγορᾷ forum rerum venalium. Vide Scapulam & in Steph. Thesau. vox est Mercor.

<sup>i</sup> Mr. *W.*'s first Discourse, p. 31.

<sup>k</sup> See also *Lightfoot*, Vol. I. p. 550.



## L E T T E R II. 43

But this Blunder, or Misrepresentation shall I call it? our Critick wanted to apply to his own Purpose, right or wrong: for he goes on, *how applicable the Word was to any Merchants of the old Temple at Jerusalem is hard to conceive. But it is very agreeable to our Ecclesiastical Collybists, who, as I may appeal to Free Thinkers, vend their brazen-fac'd Bulls and Blunders, at an extravagant great Price<sup>1</sup>.*

This little piece of low Wit, attended with ill Manners, may affect the Clergy the less, because it is a Bull of his own making, without Horns, for which the Clergy have given no Cause; and therefore it only affects himself, as one that seems grossly ignorant of *Greek*, or else as a very unfair and malicious Adversary, that speaks bold things without Wit; on purpose only to please the common Enemies of Clergymen of all Denominations.

The last Instance of his consummate Skill in *Greek*, follows, *And if τραπέζας, which is translated Tables, doth properly*

<sup>1</sup> Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 31.

## 44 LETTER II.

*signify Pulpits, who can help it<sup>m</sup>? Low Wit again! For his Quotation from Scapula's Lexicon being imperfect, we must conclude he design'd to mislead his ignorant or indolent Readers; than which nothing can be more unworthy of a Gentleman.*

*I will give you the whole Quotation, The Word signifies a Table, sometimes it is us'd of a Table spread and furnish'd with Provision, sometimes it is by way of Eminence call'd a Table of Money-Changers, as in Demosthenes, he put seven Pounds on the Table — And in Aristophanes it is call'd Pulpitum, or an High Place, where Slaves that were to be sold were expos'd<sup>n</sup>.*

*So that if false Quotations and Misrepresentations of the Sense of the Fathers, who yet are not allow'd to be more infallible Interpreters of Scripture,*

<sup>m</sup> Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 31. And his Citation in the Margin, N<sup>o</sup> 41. out of Scapula.

<sup>n</sup> Τραπεζα mensa — interdum accipitur, pro mensâ instructâ epulis — interdum sic quasi κατ' ἔξω χῆν. Nominatur mensa argentariorum seu nummulariorum: ut apud Demosth. ἐπὶ τῇ τραπέζῃ ὄντες ἐπὶ τῇ πύλῃ — Apud Aristoph. sic vocatur Pulpitum, here Mr. W. stops, but in the Lexicon it follows, aut locus editor, in quo vernæ & mancipia omnium oculis venum exponebantur. Teste Poll. Lib. VII.

than

## L E T T E R I I. 45

than modern Divines; if because they allegorize the Miracles of Christ, therefore they disown the literal Sense; if straining and perverting three Greek Words, making them signify, what no other but this learned Man ever imagin'd, and in which I persuade my self he is to this Day singular, then he is most certainly in the right; but surely he must have a mean Opinion of his fellow Creature's Understandings, (who have access to Books, and can read them as well as himself, and understand them much better) to think thus to impose on the World. And now I join with him in his *Appeal to our Divines, whether it be an absurd, improbable, and incredible Story according to the Letter?* Which Mr. W. asserts, but hath not prov'd, and I deny: *And whether it be any other than, as the Fathers said of it, a prophetical and parabolical Narrative of what would be mysteriously and more wonderfully done by Jesus.* Which he hath not prov'd that the Fathers ever said, so as to deny the Matter of Fact, the literal Sense or the Truth of the History; but you see his

• Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 31.



## 46 LETTER II.

Proofs are only bold Assertions, unfair Quotations and false Wit. Thus I have finish'd my Remarks on this Miracle, and must reserve my Thoughts of Mr. *W.*'s Performance on the next Miracle to a following Letter, and am in the mean Time, Sir,

*Your most obedient Servant.*

LETTER

## LETTER III.

SIR,

I AM now to consider another Miracle of Jesus, which Mr. *W.* makes his second, and that is his casting the Devils out of the Madman, or Madmen, and permitting them to enter into the Herd of Swine, which thereupon ran down a Precipice, and were all choak'd in the Sea<sup>a</sup>. I am glad to find he allows, to exorcise or cast Devils out of the possess'd, without considering the Nature of such a Possession, or the Nature and kind of the Devil, to be not only a kind and beneficent Act; but a great Miracle<sup>b</sup>. Yet presently after, as as if he had granted too much, he is pleas'd to say: But then, be the Miracle as great as can be imagin'd, it is no more than what false Teachers, Workers

<sup>a</sup> Mr. *W.*'s first Discourse, p. 31, 32.

<sup>b</sup> *Ibidem*.

of

### 48 L E T T E R III.

*of Iniquity, and even some Artists amongst the Jews, have done before ; consequently such a Work of Exorcism in our Saviour, could be no Proof of his divine Authority<sup>c</sup>. But what is this to the Purpose of Mr. W.'s Book? I thought his Business was to disprove the Facts of Christ's Miracles, and the Facts must be prov'd, or disprov'd, before we can conclude any thing from them, either for or against Christ's divine Power: to what Purpose then doth he say? And if there was no more to be said against this Miracle, this is enough to set it aside, and to spoil the Argument of Jesus's divine Power from it<sup>d</sup>. Suppose we could not prove his divine Power from this Miracle, doth it follow, that therefore it is not literally true, that it was never actually done or perform'd by Christ? But Mr. W. and all the Enemies of Revelation know well enough, that if the Facts and History be true of Christ's Miracles, they are a solid Ground of his divine Mission, as Nicodemus justly concludes, and every unprejudic'd Person must conclude, John iii. 2. Tho' he keeps not close to his*

<sup>c</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>d</sup> *Ibidem.*

Argument,



Argument, he discovers his Design. And at length comes to his Point, saying; *But there are many Circumstances in this Story literally consider'd, that would induce us to call the Truth of the whole into question<sup>e</sup>.* And now, Sir, to oblige both him and you, I will consider the Circumstances, he thinks fit to mention, *that would induce us to call the Truth of the whole into question.*

He queries, *How came those Madmen to have their Dwelling amongst the Tombs of a Burying-Ground<sup>f</sup>?* The Evangelists will answer him, St. Matthew says, *they were exceeding fierce, so that no Man might pass by that way<sup>g</sup>.* And St. Mark, who speaks only of one of the two that were possess'd, tells us, *he had his dwelling among the Tombs, and no Man could bind him, no not with Chains: because that he had been often bound with Fetters and Chains, and the Chains had been pluck'd asunder by him, and the Fetters broken in pieces: Neither could any Man tame him<sup>h</sup>.*

And what if the Devils Delight in Tombs? *That out of Hatred of the human Race, they might triumph over, or*

<sup>e</sup> Ut antea.

<sup>g</sup> Mat. viii. 28.

<sup>f</sup> Ut supra.

<sup>h</sup> Mark v. ver. 3, 4.

50 LETTER III.

*insult the Bodies of the deceas'd? Or what if it was to confirm People in that Error, that the Souls of the Dead were turn'd into Demons? And this I find mention'd by Mr. W's Friend Theophylact<sup>k</sup>.*

Again he asks, *Where was the Humanity of the People, that did not take care of them, in Pity to them, as well as for the Safety of others<sup>l</sup>?*

But he should remember some People may ask more Questions in an Hour, than all the wise Men of Greece could answer in a Year: And tho' his way of Arguing is by proposing Questions, I will humour him in answering, that the History of the Gospel informs us, *they had been bound with Fetters and Chains, but to no purpose, because they were so fierce and strong: Nay, he answers, or at least contradicts himself in his own Words, or if no Chains, as the Text says, which is hardly credible, could hold them, it was possible surely, as well as lawful, to dispatch them, rather than their Neighbours and Passengers should be in danger from them<sup>m</sup>.*

<sup>i</sup> Vide Mald. & Poli Synop. in loc.

<sup>k</sup> Vide Theophyl. in Mat. viii. p. 45.

<sup>l</sup> Mr. W's first Discourse, p. 32, 33.

<sup>m</sup> *Ibidem.*

But

# L I E T T E R I I I. 51

But it seems the *Gadarens* had more Mercy and Pity than Mr. *W.*; for tho' indeed they could have soon dispatch'd those miserable Creatures, they would not take it upon them, not thinking they had Authority from God's Law, to dispatch them; but to imitate God in Longanimity and Compassion: And if it was not lawful to dispatch them, why should not pity be shewn those distress'd miserable Creatures? For they are represented by the Evangelists as great Objects of Pity. Therefore I think Mr. *W.* hath no Reason to exult and defy us, in the Manner he doth, saying, *believe then this Part of the Story, who can!* For Men of better Sense than he, will believe it, until it is disprov'd by better Arguments, than he hath yet produc'd: Tho' he proceeds in this poor way of Arguing, and says, *But what's worse, it's not credible there was any Herd of Swine in that Country. If any Historians but the Evangelists had said so, none would have believ'd it. The Jews were forbidden to eat Swine's Flesh: What then should they do with Swine (which are good for nothing till they are dead) who eat neither Pig, Pork, nor Bacon?*



## 52 LETTER III.

*Some may say, that they were kept there for the Use of Strangers: But this could not be, because that after the time of Antiochus, who polluted the Temple with the Sacrifice of an Hog, the Jews forbid under the Pain of an Anathema, the keeping of any Swine in their Country. Perhaps it may be said, that the Gadarens, so call'd from the Place of their abode, were not Jews, but neighbouring Gentiles; with whom it was lawful to eat and keep Swine. We will suppose so, tho' it is improbable; but then, it is unlikely (without better Reason than at present we are apprais'd, he would say, apprais'd of) that our Saviour would permit the Devils to enter into a Herd of them to their Destruction<sup>n</sup>? But, Sir, it is for our Comfort, that the Truth of this Story of the Evangelist in this Point, of there being Swine in Palestine at that time, is confirm'd by other Historians; particularly by Macrobius, who says upon Herod's murdering the Infants of Bethlehem, the Emperor Augustus pass'd this Jest, that it was better to be Herod's Hog*

<sup>n</sup> Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 33, 34.

*than*

than his Son<sup>o</sup>. Nor hath he prov'd that the *Gadarens* were *Jews*, but only says, *it is improbable* they were Heathens; nor hath he prov'd that such an Anathema, (if there was any such thing) would deter the *Romans* there, from keeping Swine, who were the Lords of the Country, and lov'd such Food exceedingly; or that tho' the *Gadarens* were *Jews*, they would be deterr'd by that Anathema from keeping Swine, whereby they had a gainful Trade with the Gentiles: Nay, don't we find the modern *Jews*, however zealous for their Traditions, deal in many things with the Gentiles, for the sake of Profit, that are not consonant to the Mosaical Economy?

Mr. W. asks, *Where was the Goodness and Justice of his so doing? Let our Divines account for it, if they can.*

\* Cum audisset (Augustus) inter Pueros, quos in Syria Herodes Rex Judæorum intra bimatum jussit interfici, filium quoque ejus occisum: ait *melius esse Herodis porcum esse quam filium*, Macrob. Sat. Lib. II. c. 4. See my very judicious and learned Friend Mr. Lardner his incomparable Book, *The Credibility of the Gospel History*, Vol. II. p. 198. And Mr. Mason's *Slaughter of the Children in Bethlehem*, as an historical Fact in St. Matthew's Gospel vindicated, Sect. 11. p. 13.

See also Lightfoot, Vol. II. on Mat. viii.

Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 34.

But

## 54 LIEUTENANT III.

But is not this accountable by his own Concession? For he calls it *a kind and beneficent Act* to cast Devils out of the possess'd. And as for Christ's sending them into the Herd of Swine, (which by the way was after the kind and beneficent Act done to the poor Men, and is a distinct thing from it) if Mr. W. is a Christian, and allows our Saviour to be the *Heir of all things*, (which even the *Socinians* will affirm) can our Lord be impeach'd of doing any wrong, in permitting the Devils to enter into the Herd of Swine to their Destruction? No, he had full Authority to do it: Did he then any Injustice? Did he destroy what was none of his own? If *Moses* God's SERVANT was guilty of no Injustice, in acting by God's Commission, altho' he made more Damage in *Egypt*, will any who pretends to be a Christian, question the Justice of God's own SON in acting by Commission, when he uses it only in destroying two thousand Swine? But let us hear how he goes on expostulating, *It is commonly said of our Saviour, and I believe it, that his Life was entirely innocent, that his Miracles were all useful and beneficial to Mankind, and that*



# LETTER III. 55

did no wrong to any one. But how can this be rightly said of him, if this Story be literally true? The Proprietors of the Swine were great Losers and Sufferers; and we don't read that Jesus made them amends, or that they deserv'd such Usage from him. But without regarding Compliments to Christ, or his owning that he wrought any Miracles besides Allegories, it is not unreasonable to think, that hereby the Gadarens were justly punish'd for their Covetousness in keeping Herds of Swine; (and if they were Heathens for bantering the Jews on account of their being forbidden Swine's Flesh, according to that well known Jeer of the Satyrist, *They (the Jews) don't think there is any Difference between Human and Swine's Flesh*;) Or for some other Crime of the Owners of that Herd: For their desiring him to depart out of their Coasts, is a good Ground of that Supposition: Therefore they deserv'd such Usage from him, and could not justly demand Satisfaction; nor

<sup>1</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>2</sup> Nec distare putant humanam carne suillâ — Juvenal Sat. xiv. lin. 98.

### 56 LETTER III.

can any Christian deny that our Lord had a Power of punishing them. But was not his dispossessing the Devils out of two of their Neighbours, a good Compensation of their Loss? Besides he came to offer the Gospel to them, which was more than a Compensation; if they had had the Wisdom to accept it: For as he adds, *The Proprietors of the Swine, it seems, upon the Damage done them by Jesus, desire him to depart out of their Coasts, which he says was, to prevent farther Mischief; which was gentler Resentment, than we can imagine any others would have made of the like Injury*<sup>f</sup>. But he quite mistakes the Case, Christ was not afraid of any Mischief from them, since an whole Legion of Devils flee at his Command, and he could have pray'd, had he wanted them, and his Father would have sent him more than twelve Legions of Angels: nor do the Owners and Inhabitants speak from Resentment but from Fear, whereby they tacitly acknowledge the Justice of Christ, and are afraid, he will go on to punish them farther, by destroying all the other Herds

<sup>f</sup> Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 34.

of Swine there, or by some other Judgment. Nay, if they had not been convinc'd of his being a divine Person, or an eminent Prophet, that in God's Name could warrantably do that and much more, they would not have pray'd him to depart, but would have brought him before the Rulers, or expell'd him by main Force. But whatever Compliments he pays to the Holy Jesus, 'tis plain he is more intent in serving the Honour and Interest of the *Gadarens*, than that of Christ and Christianity; and shews a poor Affectation of Singularity in disagreeing from the plain Opinion of all Christians of all Denominations in this Matter. Did ever any Christian write in this horrible Stile? viz. *I know not what our Divines think of this Part of the Story, nor wherefore Jesus escap'd so well; but if any Exorcist in this our Age and Nation, had pretended to expel the Devil out of one possess'd, and permitted him to enter into a Flock of Sheep, the People would have said, that he had bewitch'd both; and our Laws and Judges too of the last Age, would have made him to swing for it.* Indeed I am not so much

! Ut antea.

I

acquainted



# 58 LETTER III.

acquainted with the Laws against Conjurers, and Exorcists, as to say how far an *English* Jury can proceed in that Case; but am sure the Comparison is odious between such an one, and the Blessed Jesus: for none accus'd him of diabolical Practices, but whom he bravely refuted by an Argument that put them to Silence. But Mr. *W.* goes on with his Comparisons.

*If this miraculous Story had been recorded of Mahomet, and not of Jesus, our Divines, I dare say, would have work'd it up to a Confutation of Mahometanism. Mahomet should have been with them, nothing less than a Wizzard, an Enchanter, a Dealer with familiar Spirits, a sworn Slave to the Devil; and his Mussulmen would have been hard put to it, to write a good Defence of him<sup>u</sup>.*

But is not this to insult without Proof over Christianity? Has he yet disprov'd the Truth of the Fact, or prov'd the Injustice or Unreasonableness of it? No, he is only for Harangue, Calumny and Comparison without Argument. The History of *Mahomet* and his *Alkoran*

# LETTER III. 59

have furnish'd Christians with Arguments enough to prove him an Impostor; and no Christian except our Author did ever make the Comparison between Christ and Mahomet. But let us hear him go on. When our Saviour was brought before Pilate to be arraign'd, try'd, and condemn'd, Pilate put this Question to the Jews, saying, *What Evil hath Jesus done?* If both or either of the Stories above had been literally true of Jesus, there had been no need of false Witnesses against him. The Merchants of the Temple were at Hand who could have sworn "that he was the Author of an  
" Uproar and Riot, the like was never  
" seen on their Market-Day; that they  
" were great Sufferers and Losers in  
" their Trades; and whether he or his  
" Party had stole any of their Goods or  
" not, yet some were embezzled, and  
" others damag'd; and all thro' the out-  
" ragious Violence of this unruly Fellow,  
" against Law and Authority." If such Evidence as this was not enough to convict him of a capital Crime, then the Swineherds of the Gadarens might have depos'd, " how they believ'd him to be a  
" Wizzard, and had lost two Thousand

## 60 LETTER III.

*“ Swine thro’ his Fascinations: That he  
 “ bid the Devils to go into our Cattle,  
 “ is not to be deny’d. And if he cur’d  
 “ one or two of our Countrymen of a  
 “ violent Possession, yet in as much as  
 “ he did us this Injury in our Swine,  
 “ we justly suspect him of diabolical  
 “ Practices upon both.*

*Upon such Evidence as this, Pilate asks the Opinion of the Jews, saying, what think you? If they all had condemn’d him to be guilty of Death, it is no wonder, since there is not a Jury in England would have acquitted any one arraign’d and accus’d in the like Case.”*

*Our Saviour was indeed try’d before Pilate at the Feast of the Passover, when People from all Parts of Palestine came to Jerusalem; and the Accusers of Christ could have found out there some of the Gadarens, at least, some of the Buyers and Sellers in the Temple, when they search’d for Evidence against him. But hath Mr. W. yet disprov’d the Truth of the Facts, or that it was illegal or unjust for Christ to do what he did, as mention’d by the Evangelists? No, and*



### LETTER III. 61

till he does, his arguing is mere Sophistry and silly Cavil; nay, it may be well turn'd upon him; for if those Stories are not Allegories but accounts of real Facts, actually perform'd by Christ; it will follow that the Enemies of Christ believ'd those Facts to be real Miracles, for else they could easily have made them the Matter of their Accusation laid against him, which they could support by many credible Witnesses, and wanted not to suborn false Witnesses.

But can any, who hath the least Love to their Saviour read all Mr. *W's* Rant, Raillery and Blasphemy without the greatest Indignation? How great is thy Patience, Blessed Jesus, to suffer thy self to be thus treated, now thou art seated at the Father's Right Hand! Could any thing worse be writ by the Pen of a *Jew*, *Mahometan* or *Pagan*? or could the most bitter Enemy of Christ pour out more unparallel'd, unjust Charges on the Redeemer of the World?

In the Miracle consider'd in my first Letter, our dearest Lord is represent-  
ed as an *artificial Punch-Maker, who*  
*lov'd to make his Friends merry and*  
*to top them up, if he, his Mother,*  
*and*

## 62 LIE T T E R III.

*and Disciples were not in for it themselves.*<sup>2</sup>

And now in these two last Miracles, he is represented as dealing in diabolical Practices, *tho' he was manifested to destroy the Works of the Devil.* And as making an Uproar to the Damage of the Traders in the Temple, tho' it is expressly related by the Evangelist, that he *poured out the Changers Money*<sup>2</sup>, i. e. *on the Ground*, the fittest Place for it, and did not convert it to his own Use; yet Mr. *W.* in his Evidence against Christ supposes they might suggest, *whether he or his Party had stolen any of their Goods or not, yet some were embezzled, and others damaged.*

And by giving himself so great a scope in railing and reviling, may we not conclude that he dwells on such Subjects with Delight?

Yet after all he says, *without Offence, I hope, I have argu'd against the Letter of this strange Story of the Holy Jesus*<sup>2</sup>: This is exactly like the adulterous

<sup>2</sup> Mr. *W.*'s fourth Discourse, p. 31, 34, 39, 40, 41.

<sup>1</sup> John iii. 8.

<sup>2</sup> John ii. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. *W.*'s first Discourse, p. 35.

### L E T T E R III 63

Woman, *she eateth and wipeth her Mouth, and saith, I have done no Wickedness<sup>b</sup>*. He hath argued against the Letter of this Story with great Offence to Multitudes, and by endeavouring to make the literal Sense ridiculous, he hath made himself not only ridiculous, but guilty of a great deal of Sin and Folly, whilst it may be, he reckons himself a great Wit, and a wonderful Critick, able to puzzle all the learned Men in Christendom.

However it must be confess'd, that at length he seems to relent a little, as thinking he had gone too far in the reviling Strain, for he says, *I should not have dared to have said so much against it, but upon the Encouragement of Origen, and other Fathers who say, we ought to expose the Absurdities of the Letter, as much as may be, to turn Men's Heads to the mystical and true Meaning<sup>c</sup>*.

But I believe neither Origen, nor any of the Fathers have encourag'd him, to revile the Blessed Jesus in the Manner he hath done, without any good Foun-

<sup>b</sup> Prov. xxx. 20.

<sup>c</sup> Ut supra.

dation;



dation; and being without a Parallel, he must pass for an Original: Had a *Celsus*, a *Porphry*, or a *Julian* wrote in this wild Manner without Fear or Wit, it would be no great Wonder; but for one that pretends to be a *CHRISTIAN* to do it, I am astonish'd, I want Words to express my honest Indignation; not that I would stir up the Magistrate against him, if it was in my Power, tho' had he written with more Decency and good Manners, I believe his Cause, whatever that be, (whether *Judaism*, or *Deism* or what else he knows best) would not have suffered by it.

Since he makes the Motion I'm ready to hear what the Fathers say to this Miracle. Origen's Commentaries on this Part of St. Matthew and St. Luke's Gospel, he allows, are lost<sup>d</sup>; but that signifies nothing with Mr. W., who fancieth himself so well apprised of their Meanings, that whether they speak or are silent, he can not only guess, but is very positive, what they would say on such an Occasion; for he adds, otherwise unquestionably he would not only

<sup>d</sup> Ibidem. cap. xxx. ver. 7.

### LETTER III. 65

*have told us, that he believ'd no more of the Letter of this Story, than he did of the Devil's taking our Saviour to the Top of a Mountain, and shewing him all the Kingdoms of the World<sup>e</sup>; This is another positive groundless Assertion, like that concerning Justin Martyr's Opinion of the Marriage in Cana of Galilee<sup>f</sup>, which I took Notice of in my first Letter. Who dares now encounter this MIGHTY ADVERSARY? Who knows how to make the Fathers speak to his Purpose, whether they will or not; nay, even when he owns that Origen's Commentaries on this Place are lost.*

*But without Origen, on whose Opinion no Stress ought to be laid for a very good Reason, because we can't possibly know it, we have enough (he says) in the other Fathers against the Letter of this Story<sup>g</sup>.*

Here I observe, I. He is very sparing of his Proof from the Fathers on this Miracle.

\* Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 35.

f Mr. W.'s fourth Discourse, p. 44.

g Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 35.

## 66 LETTER III.

II. What he is to prove is, that the Fathers are against the Letter of the Story, but oh, how admirably doth he perform it! Of the few Fathers he quotes, there is but one, that seems to look this way. None denies that the Fathers allegorize it, but not one Passage is to be met with in his Quotations from them, against the Letter of the Story of this Miracle, and therefore they ought to be regarded as impertinent; for the Truth of this I appeal to his own Quotations, allowing them to be genuine; thus for Instance, *St. Hilary says, this Miracle is typical and parabolical; St. Austin by the two Madmen supposes Jew and Gentile were meant, and St. Ambrose says, They were so fierce as no Chains could hold them, because of their most furious Rage, and Enmity to the Church, whom no Bonds of Reason could restrain from doing Violence to the Christians*<sup>h</sup>.

Tho' I think His Translation of *St. Ambrose* in this Place is wrong, which I submit, inserting the Original in the Margin<sup>i</sup>. And in this Manner *Mr. W.* proceeds,

<sup>h</sup> *Mr. W.*'s first Discourse, p. 35, 36.

<sup>i</sup> Ut supra, N<sup>o</sup> 48. Humanum genus, ad Adventum Domini vexebatur furore dementi, rumpens vincula rationis.



# LETTER III. 67

proceeds, and like an admirable Logician, he infers from their Allegories this Conclusion, that therefore *they are against the Letter.*

Whereas, 'tis plain to every one but Mr. *W.*, that all their allegorical Interpretations are built on the literal Sense, as the things or Stories which they allegorize. But I must not pass over one thing, tho' I confess I am almost weary, *viz.* that as thro' all his learned Works, which he pours into the World in great abundance, he discovers unusual Rancour against the Clergy, calling them HIRELINGS, LITERAL DOCTORS, MINISTERS OF THE LETTER, and he queries *whether they be not* WORSHIPPERS OF THE APOCALYPTICAL BEAST, AND MINISTERS OF ANTI-CHRIST: So now in what follows, he makes as strange a Compliment to the Laity, *viz.* *After that Jesus had exorcis'd these diabolical Spirits out of the Gentiles, and brought them to their right Senses, which was upon their Conversion to the Faith; then*

*nis.* Ambros. in Lucae cap. viii. mihi p. 81. *He doth not speak of the Church, nor of Christians in particular, but of Mankind in general being subject to the Devil.*

# 68 LETTER III.

*a good way off, some Ages after, did the like Devils, by divine Permission, enter into a Herd of Swine, i. e. into Hereticks of impure Lives and furious Natures. What sort of Hereticks are meant, (This is Mr. W.'s own, and no Quotation from the Fathers) or whether they are not to be understood of Christians in general, let our Divines consider<sup>k</sup>.*

According to this sly Insinuation, CHRISTIANS IN GENERAL are the Herd of Swine, into which the Devils are enter'd: And now I think all, Laity, as well as Clergy, must agree to con him Thanks, for he hath brought his Hogs to a fine Market.

But the Clergy are strangely out of Favour with him, for what Reason I know not, and therefore he goes on, *But one would be apt to think that the Ministers of the Letter are included, because the Letter of the Scripture is mystically call'd Swine's Food<sup>l</sup>:* For which he cites St. Jerome on the xith of *Isaiah*<sup>m</sup>. But since he quotes him on *Isaiah*, why did he not quote him on this very Mi-

<sup>k</sup> Pages 36, 37.

<sup>l</sup> Ut ante.

<sup>m</sup> Mr. W.'s Margin, N<sup>o</sup> 52.

### LETTER III. 69

racle? which had been much more to the Purpose. Indeed I know no better Reason than this, because it would have been wholly contrary to his Purpose; for he doth not allegorize it in the least; nay, among other things, St. Jerome there says, *not that our Saviour might grant to the Devils, what they ask'd, he said, go: But that by the killing of the Swine, an Opportunity of Salvation might be given to the Inhabitants; for the Shepherds seeing these things, presently report it in the City<sup>n</sup>.*

St. Chrysostom abundantly confirms this Opinion, for he tells us, *Christ suffer'd the Devils to enter into the Herd of Swine, to shew us, that they had no Power so to do, without leave from God, and then adds, (let what follows be consider'd) if any would understand this mystically, there is nothing to hinder: FOR THIS IS THE HISTORY<sup>o</sup>.*

<sup>n</sup> Non quod concesserit Salvator Dæmonibus quod petebant, dixit, ite: Sed ut per interfectionem porcorum, hominibus salutis occasio præberetur: Pastores enim ista cernentes, statim nunciant Civitati, Hieron. in Mat. viii. Vol. II. mihi p. 615.

\* Εἰ δὲ τις κατὰ ἀναγωγὴν ταῦτα ἐκλάβοι, τὸ κωλύον εἶδεν. Ἡ ΜΕΝ ΓΑΡ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ ΑΥΤΗ. Chrysost. in Mat. viii. Homil. 29. mihi p. 285.

*Theophylact*



70 L E T T E R III.

*Theophylact* in like Manner on this very Miracle first gives us the literal Sense of it, and then adds, *also learn somewhat more mystical*. And in his Commentary on *Mat. viii.* he concludes only with this Remark on the literal History, *do you learn where a swinish Life is led, there Christ doth not remain but the Devil.*

And I am apt to think *St. Jerome* among the *Latin* Fathers, and *St. Chrysostome* among the *Greek*, are as good Commentators, as any of the Ancients, and you see they are for the Letter, and say little or nothing of the mystical Sense of this Miracle: And *Theophylact* so much admir'd by *Mr. W.* at other times, you see agrees with them concerning the Historical Fact.

Thus, Sir, I have finish'd what I have promis'd, and submit it to your Judgment; what *Mr. W.* may think of it, I know not, neither do I much care: he seems to be too full of himself, to receive any Light, or Conviction from any Person.

• Μαθητῶν τῶν ἀναγινώσκοντων, *Theophylact.* in *Luc. viii.* mihi, p. 361.

But

But I beg you would observe how he concludes his first Discourse on Christ's Miracles, after he hath threatned, how he would expose the literal Sense of several others, as he hath endeavour'd to do in four Discourses since. But his Manner of concluding his first Discourse like *a Moderator* (a Title he hath for some time past affected) may deserve to be consider'd, for which I must intreat your Patience a little longer.

*I have no more to do at present, (says Mr. W.) but, like a Moderator, to conclude with a short Address and Exhortation to Infidels and Apostates, the two contending Parties in the present Controversy.* And

*First to Apostates; by whom he means the Writers against the Authors of the Grounds and Scheme<sup>1</sup>, with as little Truth as good Manners; for even he owns that the Title of Apostates is apparently opprobrious, especially before he hath prov'd that there is little but Contradiction and Inconsistency among them, as he boldly asserts, or that they have deserted the Primitive Doctrine about*

<sup>1</sup> Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 61, 62.

## 72 LETTER III.

*Prophecy and Miracles:* Nay, he impertinently calls *that Title a Compliment rather than a Reproach*; tho' they are a great Number of learned Divines, every way his Superiors, and able sufficiently to defend themselves, and the Truth against his feeble and malicious Attempts; yet hath he the Assurance to say, that he *is on their Side as to the Truth of Christianity*<sup>r</sup>: But he will find it hard to make People believe it: And to carry on the Farce, he offers to *assist them heartily in the Proof of Jesus's Messiahship from Prophecy, upon the Terms of his Allegorical Scheme, propos'd in his Book call'd The Moderator*, by which he doubts not that he and these Apostates will soundly drub and maul Infidels, and beat them out of the Field of Battle<sup>s</sup>.

But that if they are so wedded to the literal Scheme, as to be unwilling to accept of his assistance, they may go on in their own way, and see (says our Moderator) *the Event of the Controversy, which in the End will turn to your Dishonour*: Because he alledges that *those two great Generals, Mr. Grounds and*

<sup>r</sup> Page 62.<sup>s</sup> Ibidem.

Mr. Scheme,



# LETTER III. 73

*Mr. Scheme, with their potent Armies of Reasons and Authorities against literal Prophecies, have grievously distress'd and gall'd them, (tho' neither he nor those Generals his Confederates have gain'd one Point) and then adds, if you don't make an honourable Retreat in time, and seek to Allegorists for Help, will gain a complete Victory and Triumph over you.* Is not this the Language of a Prize-fighter, or a Bully more than a Man of Learning? But he is widely or rather wilfully mistaken; for he must know that Christians want none of his nor his Allegorists's Help, to support the literal Sense of Prophecy: It will support itself with all Men of common Sense, that are not prejudic'd against Revelation, without having Recourse to the literal Sense of Miracles, for supporting the literal Sense of the other, viz. Prophecy.

And yet if any Christians are pleas'd to have Recourse to Miracles, they may use it as an Argument, for if the Miracles of Christ be literally and historically true, they prove he was a true Prophet, even tho' there had been no Pro-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. W.'s first Discourse, p. 63.

## 74 LETTER III.

phesies in the Old Testament concerning him: And if once Christ be allow'd to be a true Prophet, he certainly had a Claim to the Characters of Messiah in those Prophecies, and we find upon enquiry they exactly agree in him, and in no other Person whatever.

But Mr. *W.* goes on to brag, that he hath in Part prov'd, *What little Dependence there is upon his Miracles*; how foolishly this is said, you may see by these Letters: And then he modestly begs *leave repeatedly to declare that he hath done this, not for the Service of unbelieving Adversaries*, (tho' all true Christians think him one of the Herd of those unbelieving Adversaries) *but to reduce you* (call'd by him *Apostates*) *to the good old way of interpreting Oracles*, (which way of his is no older than himself) and like a Prophet he foretels *that this his way will one Day be the Conversion of the Jews and Gentiles, upon the Testimony of the Fathers*; tho' you see he has not any one Father on his Side, nor any one Christian to join him in asserting, that our Lord's Mira-

cles are not historical Facts, but only intended for Allegory.

*He much questions, whether Christians would be pleas'd with his short Discourse on Christ's Miracles, tho' he knew at first they would not; but begs of them before they put themselves into a Rage against it, to read several Fathers (whose Names he only mention'd) and other occasional ancient Pieces on one part or other of the Evangelists<sup>w</sup>; To which I beg leave in my turn to desire that he would also read the Apologies, and Disputations of the primitive Fathers, and particularly let him observe how Origen (the greatest Allegorist, except Mr. W.) in his Answer to Celsus, understands the Miracles recorded in the Old and New Testament; for which I refer him to the learned Bishop of London's most excellent pastoral Letter, publish'd a few Days since<sup>x</sup>; Tho' it may be question'd, whether he has had Leisure, Opportunity, and Capacity of reading and understanding the primitive Writers: For if he hath indeed read them; nothing but the Spirit of*

<sup>w</sup> Page 64.

<sup>x</sup> See Bishop of London's Pastoral Letter, p. 24—34. particularly, p. 29, 30, 31.



### 76 LETTER III.

Contradiction, and a rooted Enmity against Christianity could make him say, *they* (the Fathers) *countenance such a Discourse* as his, *and will abundantly assist him in the Prosecution of it*: But hath he one of the Fathers on his Side? Not one, as you may see, no not Origen, as the Bishop of London in two Pages hath fully prov'd against him. Yet Mr. *W.* hath the Assurance to comfort himself, *that if the Passion of Christians should arise to another Prosecution of him, they cannot possibly separate any of his Opinions, from the Opinions of the Fathers, to ground a Prosecution on*; but I suppose he will not say so always, if he is the honest Man he profess'd to be, when he reads the Bishop's pastoral Letter, and these three Letters, and finds that Christian Magistrates know how to distinguish between Mr. *W.*'s malicious unbelieving Assertions, and the primitive Doctrine of the Fathers.

He calls his Prosecutors *the pretendedly learned Divines of the Church of England*, tho' they are not his Prosecutors, and have a much better Pretence to Learning than himself.

<sup>y</sup> Mr. *W.*'s first Discourse, p. 64.

There

### L E T T E R III. 77

There was no need for his *Supposition*, that the Clergy would have more Wit than to prosecute him again for this Discourse\*: For I don't know that they have been concern'd in any Prosecution of him; but if the Magistrate is resolv'd to teach him to speak with Decency of Christ and Christianity, and to punish him not for his Opinions, but for his profane Bantering the most sacred Things, and palming notorious Falshoods on the World, which in writing I think is as great an Immorality, and may be more hurtful to Civil Society, than many Crimes in Life, which all agree are cognizable and punishable by the Magistrate. And if the Civil Magistrate thinks it his Duty to chastise him, he must blame himself for his own Sin and Folly, and not the Clergy, for the Zeal of a Christian Government, till he proves that Zeal to be not according to Knowledge, and to be excited by the malign Influence of the Clergy; For without offending them, I may say, that in our Country, there are Laymen at the Head of Affairs, of as good Learning and Zeal for Christianity, as any Clergymen whatever.

\* *Ibidem.*

Mr, W.

# 78 LETTER III.

Mr. W. needed not to have express'd his Hope that the Clergy will have more Ingenuity, than odiously (after their wanted Manner) to represent him to the Populace, for Profaneness, Blasphemy, and Infidelity: For they have no occasion to do it, he hath effectually done it himself, by publishing his own Shame, Ignorance and Wickedness to the World. He must excuse this Freedom of Speech, because he says to the Clergy, *appear like Men and Scholars from the Press against it, (his Book) use me as roughly in Print as you think fit, I'll not take it ill<sup>a</sup>.* I suppose the Clergy slight him as a contemptible Adversary, an Understrapper to the great Mr. Grounds and Mr. Scheme, as he calls them; so that upon Their gaining a Victory over them, he falls in Course, especially seeing he is so very vain a Man, as to express himself in the next Words, *I desire nothing more than to be furiously attack'd from the Press, which if I am not much mistaken, would give me a long'd for Opportunity to expose your Ignorance to more Advantage<sup>b</sup>.* Vain Insolence! You Sir,

<sup>a</sup> Page 64.

<sup>b</sup> Page 65.

and



### L E T T E R III. 79

and all unbiass'd Persons will own, that the Clergy of *England* have more Learning than he and all his Sceptical Brethren. But doth he not greatly expose his own Ignorance and Infidelity too in the following Paragraph? *Be not longer mistaken, Good Sirs. The History of Jesus's Life, as recorded in the Evangelists, is an Emblematical Representation of his Spiritual Life in the Soul of Man; and his Miracles are Figures of his mysterious Operations. The four Gospels are in no part a literal Story, but a System of mystical Philosophy or Theology.* But hath he offer'd to explain these pompous Words? Or given any Ground for us to be so charitable as to think, he believes Christ's Spiritual Life in the Soul of Man, or his mysterious Operations? And hath he prov'd any one of these Propositions in his Book? Nothing like it.

I have *without breaking forth into a Passion* endeavour'd, according to his Request, to vindicate the literal Story of *Jesus's driving the Buyers and Sellers out of the Temple; of his Exorcising the Devils out of the Madmen; and instead*

c Ut antea.

of

### 80 LETTER III.

of his *Transfiguration on the Mount*; I consider'd in my first Letter, his turning *Water into Wine*; which (says he) if you are able to defend against the *Fathers*, but you see I have defended the Facts with the *Fathers*, who are not my Opponents, and my *Objections* (as he adds) which I think I have done easily, upon this he promises, to give up the Cause to you, and own himself (what he says I am far enough from being) an *impious Infidel and Blasphemer*, and deserving of the worst Punishment. I now call upon him to make good his Promise: This is all the Hurt I wish him, that he may be convinc'd of his great Sin and Folly, and endeavour to undo the Mischief, I fear he hath already done by his printed Discourses.

In the mean time he doth make bold again to assert, that the literal Story of *Christ's Life and Miracles*, is an absurd and incredible Romance, full of Contradictions and Inconsistences; but bold Assertions, without better Proof than Mr. W. with the Help of all his Friends hath hitherto produc'd, will be slighted by Men of Sense, tho' never so often repeated.

He

### LETTER III. 81

He goes on asserting, (being full of his Assertions, but empty enough of good Proof) *that modern Paraphrases are not only a consequential Reflection on the Intellects of the Evangelists, and their divine Gifts of the Spirit, as if they could not write an intelligible and coherent Piece of Biography without your Help at this Distance of Time; but have even darken'd and obscur'd the seemingly native Simplicity of the Story of the Life of Jesus*<sup>d</sup>. Now he owns that the Evangelists wrote an intelligible and coherent Biography, or the Story of the Life of Jesus in a seemingly native Simplicity; but how this doth agree with an emblematical Representation of Christ's spiritual Life in the Soul of Man, and in no part a literal Story, as he asserted but in the preceding Page<sup>e</sup>, I think I could submit it to any Man of common Sense; whether this is not a plain Contradiction. But if the Evangelists really wrote the History of the Life of Jesus in a native Simplicity, Mr. W. should not be angry at Paraphrases in general; because they are, if well done, the most native and

<sup>d</sup> Pages 65, 66.

<sup>e</sup> Page 65.

M

simple



## 82 LETTER III.

simple Explanations of those Stories; and I'm sure more fit to convey the Meaning of the Evangelists, than his way of allegorizing them, which renders the Sense of them entirely precarious and uncertain.

But Mr. *W.*'s evident self-contradiction, which I don't see how he can possibly reconcile, brings to my Mind a like Contradiction in his great Friend the Author of the *Literal Scheme of Prophecy*, who in one Place speaking of the Book of Daniel says, *Divers Matters of Fact are spoken of in the Book of Daniel, in the way of Prophecy, with the Clearness of History—Which Clearness made Porphyry—Think Daniel's Book to be written about the Times of Antiochus Epiphanes*<sup>f</sup>.

And yet but six Pages, after the same acute learned Author, asserts of this very Book of Daniel, *that the whole Book is written in a particular Style, a dark, emblematical, enigmatical, symbolical, parabolical and figurative Style*. May all that labour in the Cause of Infidelity be left to themselves thus to blunder, and contradict themselves, till Infidelity be sham'd out of this Christian Kingdom!

<sup>f</sup> *Literal Scheme*, p. 151.

<sup>g</sup> Page 157.

Having

# LETTER III. 83

Having mention'd the famous Schematist, I can't help comparing him and our Author; and hope that won't be esteem'd an Affront by Mr. *W.*, who so much admires him. They agree in their superiour Knowledge of the learned Languages; the Schematist hath mistaken the Sense of but two *Hebrew* Words\*, that being a Language he don't pretend to understand; but Mr. *W.*'s perverting the Sense of several *Greek* Words, as I have before shewn, must proceed either from his Ignorance of *Greek*, tho' he pretends to great Skill in it, or from a worse Cause.

These two famous Writers agree also in running down the literal Sense of the Scripture, the Schematist takes the Prophecies of the Old Testament, and his fellow Labourer Mr. *W.* takes the Miracles of the New for his Province. And you see they agree in heaping up a Number of hard Words, which in other Writers would be reckon'd Bombast. Dorth the Scheme say, Daniel is *written in a particular Style, a dark, emblematical, enigmatical, symbolical, parabolical*

\* *נִחֲתָר* and *רָבָר* as hath been prov'd by Mr. Chandler in his excellent Defence of the Antiquity and Authority of the Book of *Daniel*, p. 156, 176, 177.

# 84 LETTER III.

*and figurative Style?* So our Author says, *The History of Jesus's Life as recorded in the Evangelists is an emblematical Representation of the spiritual Life—And the four Gospels are—a System of mystical Philosophy or Theology.* You observe they are both prov'd guilty of a gross Self-contradiction. And then they resemble each other in boasting of their own Learning, and despising others; only it must be confess'd the Scholar hath out-done his Master in abusive Language, and vain Confidence of his own mighty Abilities.

And now drawing to an End Mr. *W.* compliments his Brethren Mr. *Grounds* and Mr. *Scheme* (whom he calls INFIDELS) *with the Title of Free-Thinkers, a proper Name* (he adds) *for your Philosophical Sect, who are for the Free-Exercise of your Reason about divine and speculative Points in Theology*<sup>b</sup>; tho' they are as far from being Free-Thinkers in the true Sense of the Word, as they are from being good Philosophers; for they cramp their Understanding in confining their Thoughts only to what they

<sup>b</sup> Mr. *W.*'s first Discourse, p. 66.



## LETTER III. 85

imagine tends to confound Revelation, and set it aside. They can easily swallow the greatest Absurdity, when the Cause of Infidelity is to be serv'd by it, whereas the least Difficulty on the Side of Revelation shall be magnify'd into an utter Impossibility: Neither have these wonderful Scholars discover'd any great Skill in Logick, far less in any Part of true Philosophy.

Mr. *W.* appears very cautious of offending his fellow Labourers in the Cause of Infidelity, for *he trusts they will not be offended at the Title of Infidels, since their Writings seem to have a Tendency to Infidelity*<sup>i</sup>: Which all good Christians believe, tho' he speaks it with a Sneer, for he adds, *but if there be any Fault in your Principles, you know how to charge it on your Adversaries, the pretended Advocates for Christianity, whose Absurdities, false Reasonings, Inconsistencies, and foolish Glosses on the Scriptures, have occasion'd your Departure from the Faith in Christ*<sup>k</sup>.

Here I think his Meaning is so plain it needs no Comment, for he throws off

<sup>i</sup> Page 66.

<sup>k</sup> Pages 66, 67.

his

### 86 LETTER III.

his MASK, and joins Hands with profess'd Infidels, and seems to think himself and others like him, *the People, and that Wisdom will die with them;* but Christianity will stand its Ground, in spite of all their Opposition, and in the End, it will appear the Advocates of Christianity, however despis'd in this World by Scepticks, were the only wise Men.

Then *he thanks Mr. Scheme for the noble Present of his Book:* It is to be hop'd in return he hath made Mr. Scheme a noble Present of all his own learned Works, that they may be bound up together, as an Evidence of their joint Endeavours to destroy the literal Sense of Prophecy and Miracles.

But he foolishly imputes Mr. Scheme's not publishing his Book, but giving it away privately, to the Prosecution of the Clergy; which hath been already answer'd. He goes on in the same low Stile declaring, *that the sudden and unexpected Appearance of Mr. Scheme has reviv'd him, and rejoic'd the Cockles of his Heart. Go on then, Great Sirs, in this Controversy, which Mr. Grounds happily commenc'd; and if you are deny'd*  
the

*the Liberty of the Press, and publick Sale of your Books, I hope you'll, for all that, as Occasion offers itself, oblige the Learned and Curious with some more of your bright Lucubrations, tho' you print them, and dispose of them in this clancular and subtle Method.*

Thus you see, Sir, Mr. W. is pleas'd with every Book written against Christianity, and bestows great Commendations on the Authors, whilst he runs down, and despises all the Advocates of Christianity; and yet this very Gentlemanresents it as a great Affront; nay, looks on it as a vile Calumny to be reckon'd an Infidel: but if he be a Christian, on his own Principles, he can be no more than an Allegorical one; because his Christianity is bottom'd on nothing else but Allegorical Prophecies, and Allegorical Miracles.

After this he hath the Assurance to say, *It is not that I wish well to your Cause, that I thus encourage you; you have more Sense and Reason, than to suspect me tainted with unbelieving Principles;* this is enough to make one smile,



## 88 LETTER III.

when he hath given us Reason to suspect him more than tainted with unbelieving Principles.

What he adds is true, whether he thinks so or not, *Christianity will stand its Ground against your battering Armour; and the Church of Christ will be more firmly establish'd on a Rock of Wisdom, for that Opposition you make to it<sup>m</sup>.*

But then while he comforts his Brethren the Infidels, with *entirely vanquishing the literal Schemists, and riding in Triumph over them*, he seems to humble them with the *Allegorists arising to their Confutation and final Overthrow<sup>n</sup>*. Tho' any one may see the Infidels, and he are carrying on the same wicked Design against Revelation. Without pretending to a Spirit of Prophecy, I doubt not but Christianity will stand, when not only the Infidel, but Mr. W.'s wild Allegorical Scheme shall fall and come to nothing.

His contemptuous Treatment of the Lord Bishop of *Litchfield*, every way his Superiour, setting aside his Episcopal Character, and threatening to treat him

with such familiar Language, as never was given to one of his Order<sup>a</sup>; is unworthy of a Gentleman, a Philosopher, a Free-Thinker, or of any other Title our Author affects.

But oh! How pleas'd he seems to be to tell the World, that his intimate Friend Mr. Scheme seems to promise us a Discourse on Miracles, hoping it will soon be publish'd, and that this Discourse of his will not supersede that<sup>p</sup>.

If Mr. Scheme should publish this Discourse of Miracles, I hope it will have less Banter and Raillery; but I despair of seeing more Objections against Miracles, for who can pretend to say more on that Head, now Mr. W. hath exhausted that Subject in so many learned Books?

But our Author believes this Discourse of Miracles promis'd by Mr. Scheme will hardly be an Obstruction to his own Undertaking in Hand: How should it? When they are both written with the same View, and to serve the same dear Cause of Infidelity.

And then closes with his usual Form, which as it comes from Mr. W. appears

<sup>a</sup> Pages 68, 69.

<sup>p</sup> Ut antea.

# 90 LETTER III

no better than Cant ; for he says, *he intends to go on with his Undertaking, by God's leave, to the Honour of the Holy Jesus, our spiritual Messiah, to whom be Glory and Praise for ever and ever Amen.*

I wish I have not wearied you as well as my self in answering such wretched Stuff, which most of the Learned think unworthy an Answer ; but if my endeavours herein may do you any Pleasure and Service, I shall think my self well rewarded, being with much Esteem,

**SIR,**

*Your Friend and Servant,*

*Bridgewater-Square,  
October 30<sup>th</sup> 1728.*

**Benj. And<sup>r</sup>: Atkinson.**

**POST.**



POSTSCRIPT.

**A**FTER my Remarks were finish'd on these three Miracles, out comes a fifth Discourse on Christ's raising three Persons from the Dead, or rather an *Invective* against these Miracles. In this we have Abundance of abusive Language, which seems to be Mr. *W.*'s Talent, a long Letter from his old Friend the *Jewish Rabbi*, *i. e.* himself, little low Wit, and less Argument, with his usual Misrepresentation of the Christian Fathers.

He promises a sixth Discourse on Christ's Resurrection, or rather against it, to prove that it was only allegorically and not literally true: Before he sends it to the Press, I recommend to him, Mr. *Hum*: *Ditton's* excellent Book on that Subject, it may be he will like him the better, because he was no HIRE-LING, to use his own Phrase.

## 92 POSTSCRIPT.

I don't think Mr. *W.*'s Books deserve any farther Notice from those, who know how to spend their Time to better Purpose; I choose therefore to take my leave with a Prayer for him, as I think he greatly needs it, *Father forgive him*, tho' for his own Sake, I wish I could add, *for he knows not what he doth.*

raising three Portions from the Dead, or rather an Argument against these Miracles. In this we have Abundance of abusive Language, which seems to be Mr. *W.*'s Talent, a long Letter from his old Friend the *Yew* to him, &c. him- self, in the low *W.* Argument, with his usual *N* *S* Christian Fathers.

He promises a sixth Discourse on Christ's Resurrection, or rather against it, to prove that it was only allegorically and not literally true: Before he sends it to the Press, I recommend to him, Mr. *W.*'s excellent Book on that Subject, it may be he will like him the better, because he was no *H* *R* *E* *L* *I* *N* *G* to use his own Phrase.

I don't

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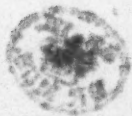
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